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CHEMICAL WATCH ARTICLES

Sweden presses European Commission on nano proposals

Further delays on amendment of REACH annexes

In a move to break the stalemate on amending the REACH annexes to better account for nanomaterials, the European Commission has accepted an invitation from Sweden to organise an informal meeting in a couple of months time.

The invitation was made at last week's meeting of the Competent Authority Subgroup on Nanomaterials (CASG-nano), after the Commission notified attendees that it would not be presenting its long-awaited proposals on amending the REACH annexes on information requirements. According to a spokesperson from Sweden's Chemicals Agency (Kemi), the issue of the annexes was pulled from the agenda a couple of days prior to the meeting, which was also cut from two days to one as a result.

Kemi says that to break the deadlock it proposed the Commission organise an informal meeting, which the EU executive accepted, and was supported by around ten member states. The spokesperson says Sweden wants the Commission to be open about the issues and especially share the versions of the proposals, which DG Environment and DG Enterprise are working on. "This would improve transparency and enable member states to see where the problems are so that they can understand the issues and try to work together to find solutions," he said.

The European Commission says it is still working to confirm the meeting.

CASG-nano participants voiced their anger over the long delay on the issue at last week's meeting, and the apparent lack of progress since they last met in October 2013 ([CW 29 October 2013](#)).

Several member states suggested that REACH is not working properly as only nine nanomaterials have been registered. They are concerned that no deadline has been set for amendment of the annexes.

European Commission officials did not want to talk about their differences on the issue. One CASG-nano participant told *Chemical Watch* that DG Environment seems to favour an approach proposed by Germany, which includes specific information requirements for nanomaterials to be added to the relevant REACH annexes. The type of information requested from those registering nanomaterials would be related to persistence, surface area or reactivity, for example. The German proposal also prohibits read-across, due to the lack of certainty that the approach works for nanomaterials as it does for “bulk” substances. Several member states are understood to support the German work.

DG Enterprise is reported to want more evidence of the risks posed by nanomaterials. The reason why the two DGs have not been able to agree on proposals so far is due to the complexity of the issue, a Commission source told *Chemical Watch*.

“The REACH [nano] review was almost two years ago and the European Commission has done nothing on the commitment it took back then,” says Tatiana Santos, senior policy officer for chemicals and nanotechnology at the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), who participated in the meeting.

Until the two DGs agree on what they want to achieve, an impact assessment cannot be conducted.

If a compromise can be hammered out over the summer, a proposal should be presented to the next CASG-nano meeting in either September or October. If accepted, an impact assessment will then be conducted and the proposals could be published by the end of the year, *Chemical Watch* understands.

Carmen Paun

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US EPA withdraws Snur for vinylidene esters

The US EPA is withdrawing a proposed significant new use rule (Snur) it issued last April for two chemical substances generically identified as vinylidene esters. They were the subject of pre-manufacture notices (PMN) under the Toxic Substances Control Act.

The agency says it is taking the action on the basis of experimental data provided by the PMN submitter, and relevant environmental fate and toxicity data associated with cyanoacrylates submitted to the EPA during the public comment period on the proposed Snur.

The EPA determined that the information it received demonstrated that cyanoacrylates, rather than esters identified in the proposed rule, are more appropriate structural analogues for assessment of potential toxicity of the PMN substances to aquatic organisms. This had been the basis of the notification requirements in the proposed Snur.

“Based on review of experimental data provided by the PMN submitter, and relevant environmental fate and toxicity data associated with cyanoacrylates, the agency no longer supports the original concerns for toxicity to aquatic organisms,” the EPA said in a *Federal Register* notice.

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